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INTELLIGENCE R.

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 Subject USSR - Inland waterways
 (Nation reported on) (Main title as per index guide) (Subtitles) (Make separate report for each title)

BRIEF—(Here enter careful summary of report, containing substance succinctly stated; include important facts, names, places, dates, etc.)
 Summary: Details of projected ship improvements, improvements to navigation,
 extension of navigable waterways in connection with the Main Turkmenian Canal.

1. From PRAVLA, 18 September 1950 (Translation by JOINT PRESS READING SERVICE).

CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW HYDRO-ELECTRIC PROJECTS
 AND THE TASKS OF THE RIVER TRANSPORT

By P. Cherevko, Deputy Minister of the River
 Transport of the USSR.

RETAIN OR DESTROY

2. ...Great changes will occur on the Volga as a navigable waterway with the construction of the new giant hydro-electric stations.
3. Major water reservoirs will be created as the result of these constructions, and navigation on these water reservoirs will require a more powerful fleet.
4. The new boats must answer the modern technical standards. The main nucleus of boats in the Volga Fleet will be screw-driven passenger boats, tug boats, cargo boats and steam-boats with high pressure steam installation and high-speed diesel engines.
5. There will be an extensive introduction of electrified boat mechanisms and a remote control of them.
6. The new navigation conditions will enable more improved methods of fleet operation and fleet traffic organization to be introduced. There will be an extensive development of route shipments of cargo as well as new methods of towing of boat convoys.
7. Ice-breaker type transport boats and even special ice-breakers will be required to prolong the navigation period on the Volga, and particularly on the water reservoirs, where the ice usually holds longer than elsewhere.

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R E S T R I C T E D

21 September 1950

MOSCOW SERIAL 116-50
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8. Our facilities on the river banks of the Volga basin will also be altered considerably.

9. The new fleet will necessitate more improved fleet service methods in the ports and in the boat repairing yards. The main trend of the development of the shore facilities will be the maximum mechanisation of much labour-absorbing operations. The industrial ministries will have to help the river transport workers in the development of new waterways, creation of a powerful fleet and the equipment of the shore facilities.

10. Changes will take place not only within the boundaries of new created water reservoirs, but also on the Kama river, as the damming of the Volga water on the Kuibyshev dam will extend its influence also on the Kama, up to the mouth of the Vyatka river.

11. A number of wharves on the Volga and the Kama will undergo considerable reconstruction. The wharves of Stavropol, Ulyanovsk, Kazan, Chistopol and others will become major ports. New transit ports and re-marshalling roads, as well as wharves of local importance will make their appearance within the confines of the Kuibyshev and the Stalingrad water reservoirs as well as within the zone of damming on the Kama river. Both the ports and the wharves will be equipped with improved type mechanisms, fully assuring the mechanisation of loading and unloading operations.

12. The vast water reservoirs, great depths and gauges of the boats will require thorough changes in the route facilities. Lighthouses and slit metallic leading marks, up to 50 metres high, will be installed on the riverside. The present floating beacons will be replaced by lake buoys - 3 to 4 metre high metallic pyramids mounted on gigantic barrels. All the leading marks will be electrified and will be controlled automatically. The light from the lighthouse lanterns and the leading marks lanterns will be seen for dozens of kilometres and will be an excellent landmark for the navigators. There will be an extensive use of wireless communications.

13. Of great importance is the question of securing refuge bases for the fleet, especially for rafts, during storms on the water reservoirs. For this purpose it is proposed to provide special refuge ports on river sections with high waves.

14. Obviously the reconstruction of the Volga will bring about a further rapid development of the economy of the regions adjacent to this vast basin, in connection with which there will be also an increase of its freight turnover. In order to ensure a timely passage of all boat caravans and to speed up the turnaround of the river fleet, the projects for the Kuibyshev and the Stalingrad hydro-electric stations envisage the construction of similar types of locks as have been built on the Moscow canal...

15. At the present time the Amu-Darya river which flows into the Aral Sea is the only transit navigable waterway of Central Asia. Our Central Asiatic Steamship Trust carries freight and passengers along both the Amu-Darya river and the Aral Sea. These shipments are growing yearly.

16. Yet owing to the present hydrological peculiarities in the navigation conditions on the Amu-Darya, the river transport workers cannot fully satisfy the requirements of the economy of the Central Asiatic Republic in the shipping of

R E S T R I C T E D

21 September 1950

MOSCOW SERIAL 116-50
.....

17. Besides, a shortcoming of the Amu-Darya basin is that it is geographically self-contained, and lacks direct contacts with the European basins. Much freight from Central Asia can be carried into the European section of the country or vice versa only via combined railway and water routes at present.

18. The plan for the construction of the Main Turkmenian Canal provides for a thorough reconstruction of the water transport communications in Central Asia...

19. The Main Turkmenian Canal will be navigable throughout its whole length...

20. The construction of the Main Turkmenian Canal will bring about an extension of national economic contacts and will face the transport, particularly river transport, with very important tasks. The rapid development of the economy of the Central Asiatic Republics will result in an intensive demand for water shipments of such goods as cotton, grain and other farm products, fuel oil, building materials, etc.

21. New industrial enterprises will spring up in the regions adjacent to the Amu-Darya basin, which will also call for an increase of the river freight turnover. In view of this it is proposed to modernise and enlarge the fleet of our Central Asiatic Steamship Trust. Boats of more improved designs will make their appearance in the Turkmenian waterways, which will answer the conditions of operation on the canals.

22. The operation of the river fleet on the Amu-Darya river will be organized in a new fashion, and the grandiose navigation route - the Main Turkmenian Canal, will have to be mastered anew. The question arises, in particular, of the extensive introduction there of electric boats.

23. And how alluring are the prospects opening for the water transit communications between Central Asia and the European section of our country, between the Amu-Darya, the Main Turkmenian Canal, the Caspian Sea and the Volga!

24. The successful fulfilment of the complex tasks confronting the river transport workers in connection with the construction of the new giant hydro-electric power projects depends in the first place upon the experience of our personnel.

25. An urgent task of developing the training and re-training of personnel, bearing in mind the new requirements, arises for the river transport workers...

26. Great and important tasks are in store for the river transport workers in the direct servicing of the majestic construction projects on the Volga and in the Amu-Darya basin. Hundreds of thousands of tons of various freight, such as building materials, machinery and other equipment are needed for these projects. These freights must be to a large extent delivered via the river routes, since the new hydro-electric power projects and canals are being built either on the waterways themselves or in a direct vicinity of them.

R E S T R I C T E D

R E S T R I C T E D

21 September 1950

MOSCOW SERIAL 116-50

27. It must be also borne in mind that the railway tracks leading to the construction sites of the future hydro-electric power stations are only just now being laid. Prior to their completion the river fleet will have to handle the bulk of shipments for the needs of the construction.

28. The workers of the Volga, Moscow and other steamship trusts are assuming extra socialist obligations for high speed shipping of freight for the construction of the Kuibyshev and Stalingrad hydro-electric stations. Caravans of boats carrying these freights are moving along the Moscow Canal, the Kama river, the Mariinsk waterway system and the Volga...

29. PREPARING OFFICER'S COMMENT: This article seems quite valuable as an overall study of what the Soviet Union would like to accomplish on its river system (and a measure of what it lacks at present).

30. Remarks about ice on the reservoirs and "storm refuge ports" are to be noted.

31. Remarks about the Main Turkmenian Canal are an extension of the rampant propaganda covering the Soviet press at present in connection with this grandiose scheme. It is significant that this is the first article to come to the attention of this office which mentions navigation in addition to the more publicized features of irrigation and hydro-electric power.

Prepared and submitted:

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.....NA COMMENT

1. The subject of the various decrees recently issued by the Soviet Government covering the construction of four immense power, irrigation, and canal projects, is undergoing extensive study by other departments of the Embassy. It is believed that only a very general comment on this subject is necessary at this time.
2. The translation incorporated in this report is the first overall presentation of the various projects to come to hand. Since this was written, a fourth decree has been issued covering the KAHKOVKA DAM on the DNEPR and the SOUTH UKRAINIAN and NORTH CRIMEAN CANALS. In general, all of these projects are to be completed before 1957. However, the immensity of any one of the projects is such as to preclude the completion of all of the projects in such a short period and it is felt that they will still be underway in 1960 and thereafter.
3. As the individual projects are so vast, and since the limitations of Soviet manpower and industry are well-known, it is believed that these projects are actually being announced now in advance of a definite Five-Year Plan purely as propaganda measures. The idea of the Soviet Union being mobilized completely for such peaceful construction work while the rest of the world mobilizes for war is being stressed in almost all articles dealing with the decrees.
4. When the actual construction of the various dams and canals gets underway, it will be possible to provide more definite reports on the areas inundated, the new ports constructed, etc. To date, reports in the press have been confined to articles and photographs of the proposed dam sites, reports from factories that are destined to supply materials and machinery for the dams, and announcements of support from the farm districts affected and from various regional governmental groups.
5. A study of the decrees themselves and of the press comments as noted above would seem to indicate that detailed plans, complete field studies, etc., have yet to be done. In fact, there is some conjecture here as to whether or not the actual dam sites have been established. Some of the projects were covered in plans announced before the war only to be interrupted by the German invasion, while others are completely new. But there is no hint that work has actually started in any of the areas and it is presumed that it will be late in 1951 before the first concrete will be poured.

ONI COMMENT:

Concur with Acting NA Comment that these grandiose plans will probably not be completed by 1957. Of special interest is the statement that looks at the Kuibyshev and Stalingrad dams will be the same size as those of the Moscow Canal.